



# USCSAHT NEWS

“Ending Slavery is Everyone’s Work”

APRIL 2016

## USCSAHT leads “Women of the Senate” Campaign to build support for S. 1968

The Legislative Advocacy Working Group of U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) is mounting a campaign to build support among Senate women for S 1968 the *Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act*. The bill, introduced by Richard Blumenthal, the senior senator from Connecticut, would amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require certain large companies to disclose information describing any measures the company has taken to identify and address conditions of forced labor, slavery, human trafficking, and the worst forms of child labor within the company’s supply chains.

USCSAHT hopes to persuade the 20 women senators to co-sponsor S 1968 the *Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act*. The legislative advocacy working group is planning a six-week long campaign for constituents to contact each of the Senate women multiple times and persuading her to co-sponsor S 1968. The campaign, which will run from April 25 to June 10, will include emails, phone calls, social media, and visits with staff in Washington and in the Senators’ home states.

“We are grateful to the women of the Senate for their past efforts to end human trafficking and we were very encouraged when the women of the Senate, Republicans and Democrats alike, chose to focus their common efforts in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress on ending human trafficking,” said Ann Scholz, SSND, chair of the USCSAHT working group on legislative advocacy. “We think their bipartisan support for S 1968 would go a long way to ensuring its eventual passage.”

The *Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act* expresses the sense of Congress that companies should provide consumers with information about the company’s efforts to ensure that its products are free of child labor, forced labor, slavery, and human trafficking. That information will help both the businesses themselves and consumers avoid inadvertently promoting or sanctioning these crimes through production and purchase of raw materials, goods, and finished products that have been tainted by human trafficking or slave labor in the supply chains.

*“The regulations shall mandate that the required information be disclosed on such issuer’s Internet website through a conspicuous and easily understandable link to the relevant information labeled ‘Global Supply Chain Transparency.’”*

Learn more about the Women of the Senate Campaign and download the resources you need to participate by visiting: <http://www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org/take-action/legislative-action/women-senate-campaign/campaign-overview/>



## Kathleen Coll, SSJ, represents USCSAHT at January *Talitha Kum* meeting

*Talitha Kum*, the International Network of Consecrated Life Against Trafficking in Persons, held a meeting of representatives from countries to work on a strategic plan. Gabriella Bottani, CMS, Director of *Talitha Kum*, invited 2-5 representatives from each continent to attend the seven-day meeting. Sessions were held at UIS headquarters in Rome, where *Talitha Kum*'s offices are housed, and at the Pontifical Academy for Arts and Sciences in Vatican City.



Representatives of *Talitha Kum* member networks met in Rome in January 2016. Kathleen Coll, SSJ, standing, second from the left.

representatives from each continent to attend the seven-day meeting. Sessions were held at UIS headquarters in Rome, where The first three days of the meeting included introductions, country reports, and work on the strategic plan/Declaration. The following days were spent in meetings in Vatican City with scholars and dignitaries, including Cardinal Joao Braz de Avez, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life, Kenneth Hackett, U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, and Patricia Murray, IBVM, Executive Secretary of UISG.

At the close of the meeting, representatives attended the closing liturgy for the Year of Consecrated Life, held at St. Peter's with Pope Francis as the presider.

Kathleen Coll, SSJ, deeply appreciated her network colleagues. "The women who came together were very impressive. The work being done by sisters throughout

the world encompasses every aspect of the human trafficking spectrum. We will be working more

closely with other representatives from our respective continents in the future. For us, that currently means Montreal, Canada. We look forward to building this relationship and to learning from one another as we continue to work toward our common goal: the eradication of all forms of human trafficking."

The *Talitha Kum* Declaration can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

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## USCSAHT approved for 501(c)(3) status



In late February, the Steering Committee of USCSAHT (Anne Victory, HM, Kathleen Coll, SSJ, and Ann Oestreich, IHM) were informed that USCSAHT's application for 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status was approved by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This means many changes are happening at USCSAHT.

Among these changes are the establishment of a Board of Directors and Executive Officers. Members of the existing Core Group are now the Board members; Steering Committee are now serving as officers of USCSAHT. (President: Anne Victory, HM; Secretary: Ann Oestreich, IHM; Treasurer: Kathleen Coll, SSJ.) At the annual meeting of the Board in October, the Blocks & Bridges Team from the Sisters of Charity Foundation in Cleveland will work with us on three vital areas:

becoming an effective, impactful Board; communicating the mission of USCSAHT in a meaningful way to members and the general public; and building a financially sustainable structure for USCSAHT.

At their March meeting, the Board approved a proposal for bringing new members on to the Board. It will be finalized in October and communicated to all of the members.

Since 2013, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Philadelphia have served as our financial agent. We are very grateful to the Philadelphia SSJs for this service, which allowed us time to organize and build USCSAHT over the past three years.

## Website adds new features, resources

Have you visited our website recently? ([sistersagainsttrafficking.org](http://sistersagainsttrafficking.org)) If so, you may have noticed several changes and additions over the past four months.



- ✚ The homepage calendar has been replaced by an “Events” tab. This allows us to list your local events in an easily readable way, and include links to your informational flyer and Google Maps to direct interested people to your event!
- ✚ Under the “Resources” tab, you’ll find a link to Faith Resources. Each month, one of our members shares a reflection on human trafficking in the context of our faith.

<http://www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org/resources/prayer-resources/monthly-reflection/>

- ✚ Navigation improvements have been made, including a “Back to Top” button on each page. No more endless scrolling!
- ✚ Under the “Education” tab, new learning modules have been added. A new feature coming soon will be educational modules and resources for health care and social service professionals.
- ✚ Under the “Take Action” tab, you’ll find an important resource for Survivor Assistance. We offer those interested a way to assist survivors continue their education or find employment at <http://www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org/take-action/opportunities-for-action/survivor-assistance/>
- ✚ Continue to visit the website often. You’ll find interesting news items, resources, and opportunities for advocacy there every week.
- ✚ **Coming soon:** a password-protected Member’s Area. There you will find reports from the Board of Directors, information about shelters for human trafficking victims, and much more.

## Take Action: support survivors through education and employment



The Survivor Support working group of U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking is appealing to congregations of women religious, coalitions and individuals to assist survivors of human trafficking with education and job placement opportunities. USCSAHT is establishing a Josephine Bakhita



Scholarship Fund, which will assist survivors to reach educational goals: ESL, GED, BA and BS degrees.

You can contribute in several ways:

- Make annual donations to the Josephine Bakhita Scholarship Fund;
- Offer a full or partial scholarship from one of your sponsored educational institutions to a survivor.
- Offer a survivor a paid position in a setting suited to her skills.

To make a tax-deductible donation, please send a check made payable to *U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking*. In the memo line or elsewhere, please indicate that this donation is directed to the Josephine Bakhita Scholarship Fund.

Send your donation to:

***U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking***

Attn. Sister Kathleen Coll, SSJ  
235 Windermere Avenue  
Wayne, PA 19087

For more information on this program and the Employment Partnership Program, click on the following links:

Employment Partnership Program:

<http://www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/USCSAHT-Employment-Partnership.pdf>

Education Partnership Program:

<http://www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/USCSAHT-Education-Partnership.pdf>

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## Help USCSAHT Grow!

In April 2015, USCSAHT sent out its first invitation for membership and in the past year, the response has been wonderful. Our members include:

- ✚ 60 congregations of women religious;

- ✚ 17 coalitions working in partnership with women religious; and
- ✚ 15 individual partners.

Our members come from 25 different states and the District of Columbia.

As we move into our second year, we hope to add many new members to join us in our common mission to eradicate human trafficking. Our collective voice is stronger than any one of us is on our own.

We need the help of our current members to invite more congregations to join us! Here are some ways in which you can help USCSAHT grow.

- ✚ Invite other congregations in your LCWR Region to join USCSAHT. Direct them to our online membership form <http://www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org/join-us/> or share this mail-in membership form with them. <http://www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/USCSAHT-Membership-Printable-Copy.pdf>
- ✚ Encourage your members, associates, co-workers, and friends to visit and “Like” our Facebook page. The page is updated every day! [https://www.facebook.com/SistersAgainstTrafficking/?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](https://www.facebook.com/SistersAgainstTrafficking/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel)
- ✚ Send information about your local anti-trafficking events for inclusion on our website! Help us show people throughout the country see how active US Catholic Sisters and our partner organizations are in the movement to end human trafficking.\*
- ✚ Share resources (prayers services, educational resources, corporate stands, etc.) with us for inclusion on our website. Your congregation/coalition will be cited as the creator/contributor of each resource you share.\*



- ✚ Send articles about your anti-trafficking activities (educational opportunities, prayer vigils and demonstrations, corporate responsibility actions, etc.) to us for inclusion on our website, Facebook page and Twitter! Allow us to help you inspire others by sharing the good news of your actions with a wide audience. Be sure to include photos!\*
- ✚ Help us promote our education and advocacy campaigns, such as the “Women of the Senate” campaign (see page 1 for details). Let’s use our collective voice to influence public policy on labor, sex and organ trafficking.
- ✚ Find creative ways to support USCSAHT. Make a donation to USCSAHT to honor your congregation’s Jubilarians, a significant anniversary, or in honor of a person who appreciates the work of women religious against human trafficking.

As our organization grows, so does our need for financial support that will enable us to serve our members. If your congregation has a fund that allows organizations such as USCSAHT to apply for grants, please let our treasurer, Kathleen Coll, SSJ, know. ([kcoll2002@yahoo.com](mailto:kcoll2002@yahoo.com))

Annual membership renewal notices will begin going out this month. Renewal notices will be sent the representative of each congregation or coalition in our database. Please respond to the renewal notices as promptly and generously as possible. As always, we are very grateful for your support.

\*Send event information, resources, articles and photos to [atoestreich@aol.com](mailto:atoestreich@aol.com)

Talitha Kum  
**ARISE**

# Declaration

Rome, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016

We members of Talitha Kum, the worldwide Network of religious life against trafficking in persons.

**We denounce the crime of Trafficking in persons and proclaim it as a grave offense against the dignity of the person and a serious violation of human rights.**

As consecrated persons and women religious in solidarity with our sisters and brothers who suffer the consequences of this evil we will speak out louder and clear.

**We strongly condemn** this crime, addressing ourselves first of all to all the society, which permits wealth and power to control the lives and dignity of our sisters and brothers who are sold and rendered objects of this modern form of slavery.

**We urge** local and national Catholic Episcopal Conferences, Regional and National Conferences of Religious, and religious congregation to take a stance and commit themselves with renewed energy for the protection, promotion and fulfillment of the rights of these sisters and brothers and to denounce all forms of trafficking.

**We call on governments** to be responsible not only to make laws against trafficking and to protect the victims, but also to implement these laws at all levels and to allocate adequate resources both human and material to combat this crime and compensate the victims. It is their responsibility to activate local, national and international networks capable of effectively countering this trafficking in persons.

**We commit ourselves:**

- To network among ourselves and with other social, civilian, religious and political organizations.
- To strengthen existing efforts and initiatives to reduce the causes of human trafficking.
- To maximize and update resources for the prevention, protection, prosecution, assistance, awareness raising and condemnation of trafficking in persons.
- To continue to develop educative programs that awake the consciousness of people and denounce this phenomenon.
- To participate in research in order to better understand causes, risk factors and vulnerabilities in the new scenarios of human trafficking.

**We know** that only by working in collaboration and solidarity will be able to confront the structural causes that generate trafficking. This mission obliges us to take a prophetic stance that requires of us continuous conversion and change of mentality.

**We renew our commitment** to promote the dignity of every person as a response to Christ's words: *"I have come that they may have life, life in its fullness"* (John 10:10)

*The text of this declaration is reprinted on the following page.*



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**Denounce the crime of trafficking in persons and proclaim it as a grave offense against the dignity of the person and a serious violation of human rights.**

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- Participate in research in order to better understand causes, risk factors and vulnerabilities in the new scenarios of human trafficking.

**We know** that only by working in collaboration and solidarity will we be able to confront the structural causes that allow trafficking to exist. This mission obliges us to take a prophetic stance that requires of us continuous conversion and change of hearts and minds.

**We renew our commitment** to promote the dignity of every person as a response to Christ's words: "*I have come that they may have life, life in its fullness.*" (John 10:10)

*Adopted January 27, 2016, Rome, Italy*

